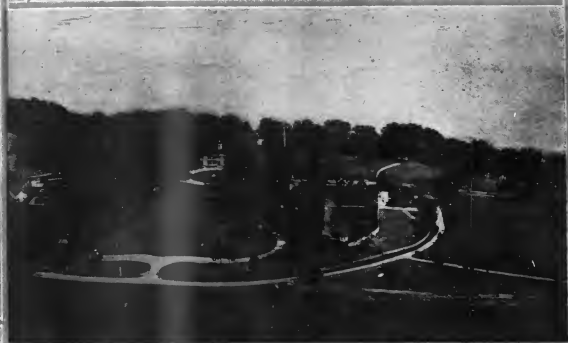


FEBRUARY 21, 1921

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VOLUME X
Number 8

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INDEX TO CONTENTS

Editorials	227	Aero Engine Efficiency	236
The Latest Semi-Passenger Monoplanes	228	Book Review	240
Parent Airplanes Delivered	229	Surveying Oil Properties	243
Report Given on Aircraft Material	229	American Press Commends Air Mail	241
Strength Tests of Screw Fasteners of Plywood	230	Air Drive Motor Fuel	242
Civilian Aviation Schools	231	First Year's Benefit in Aircraft Underwriting ..	243
Vases in Metal Construction	232	Aircraft Inspection	243
Note on Movement of Speed of Airplanes	233	Test of New Air Service Engines	243
Los Angeles to N. Y. in Two Days	234	Government Aeronautical Documents	244
Chief Controller of Air in Australia	234	Therapeutics Delivered by Airplane	244
Indian Air Service Engines	235	The Medical Problems of Flying	244
Wood Tensile Test Station	235	German Plane Inquiry	245

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Vol. 2

FEBRUARY 21, 1935

No. 6

Aircraft—Our First Line

THE newspaper has gone so much prominence to Gen. Mitchell's testimony regarding the possibilities of aircraft successfully attacking battleships that the opinion of other Air Service officers has been overlooked. Gen. Mitchell has recently stated in answer to a question as to whether he was certain that the Air Service would be able to destroy battleships and put service out of business replied "I don't see any reason to doubt that. It is a question of development." He went further saying he believed that it was just the war show that an answer could be provided. He has little fear of anti-aircraft guns as they have been automatically ineffective as weapons and pilots can be relied on to penetrate and survive.

Col. Thomas H. Ross has gone even further than Gen. Mitchell. He has said, "I feel right now that we can go out and put battleships out of action with the facilities we now have. We have only been at it four years, while the Navy has been developing its guns for three hundred years. Our accuracy for two hundred miles is better than their accuracy at a range of forty thousand yards."

Such testimony from the Chief of Air Service and the officer in charge of development work must be taken with the greatest seriousness.

State Air Legislation Agency

THE news that a bill providing for state regulation of air navigation is to be introduced in the Senate of Kansas again serves to emphasize the new need of a federal law of the air. However laudable the intent of the Kansas legislation, it cannot be pointed out too strongly how unfortunate an example they would give to other States. Air navigation under state control must needs lead to friction and confusion. Already travel has equality to be legislated upon by single states. What the country requires, if commercial aviation is to develop along healthy lines, is a national air law which will apply to the whole territory of the Union.

While the States of Connecticut and Massachusetts have laws affecting flying, these are rather of a general nature so that they do not actually hamper aviation. The Kansas bill, however, provides severe rules for the licensing of pilots and the inspection of aircraft by agents of the state.

This is, of course, a dangerous precedent. Congress should wake up to this fact before it is too late, and enact the federal air legislation the country requires.

Exaggerated Refinement in Stress Analysis

CONSTRUCTORS and designers have all found to use adequate methods of stress analysis. Such methods are essential in part, some times based on unrefined mathematical data which are open to question, yet on the whole in accordance with the results of actual tests and of actual service. The

methods have become complicated, can be readily applied, and furnish a sound basis of comparison with previous designs analyzed and tested in similar fashions.

The designer is on the whole properly satisfied with these methods and does not welcome innovations.

On the other hand, workers in the aeronautical field whose interests do not lie so much in design and construction as in research, criticism, specification or building, are always pressing for refinement and greater complexity in analysis. Their claim is that therein lies the possibility of real progress and that the adoption of more refined methods should be no handicap to the industry. For some time, they were fervent champions of the theory of analysis. Then again they have sought to introduce the somewhat lengthy methods of the Theory of Least Work into the structural analysis of airplanes.

In the first place it would seem to us, that in the present state of the industry, where but a few machines of any one type are made, engineering costs are already sufficiently high. An increase in complexity of method increases not only the cost of the engineering analysis on any one machine, but also the general expenses of the engineering department of a firm.

This, however, would be perfectly justified if real progress were realized thereby. The question is whether progress does in reality depend on such increase in refinement. While much more are developing methods of stress analysis designed to evaluate stresses in external drift wires by the method of least work, engineers are abandoning the external drift wires, or incorporating their functions in the front lift wires. While the theory method, with great array of hyperbolic functions and tables, is showing in how to compute stresses due to lift and weight, engineers are eliminating lift and weight loads. While the most lavish attention is given to the calculation of modulus or stagger winging of a ligament, the ligament is being displaced by an internally braced monocoque. While the laboratories are laboriously analyzing the properties of various under stress magnifiable conditions of stress, the designers are searching for methods of replacing stress by the more satisfactory engineering materials, such as steel and duralumin.

While it is perfectly proper for research men in the field of aeronautics to continue their profound investigations, designers may honestly point out that a great many of these investigations are, while fascinating and interesting, simply intellectual exercises. Just further, before the designers may be asked to adopt refined and complicated methods, their ground should be shown that these methods are a real advance, and that they are not relied beyond the point of the rapid application necessary in practice, nor beyond the accuracy which can ever be attained as long as engineering material and construction are used. For these are not purely mathematical abstractions, but fulfillible elements about human in their variations.

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Aero Engine Efficiencies*

By A. H. Gibson, D.Sc., M.Inst.C.E., M.I.Mech.E.

By the efficiency of a petrol engine, one usually understands the thermal efficiency, as the ratio of the heat transformed to work on the crank shaft, to the heat energy in the fuel. This efficiency is usually expressed in an aero engine referred to long-distance work, since it directly affects the weight of fuel to be carried.

The necessity for a high thermal efficiency in the 1-h.p. cylinder that of a high mechanical efficiency, that is it requires that the losses due to mechanical friction and to pumping losses should be held to a minimum.

But an engine may have a high thermal efficiency, and yet have a comparatively low brake mean effective pressure. It may, owing to too small a valve area or to poor design of the induction system, only be able to draw a small weight of charge into the cylinder, although it may use this very efficiently once it is in the cylinder. Its volumetric efficiency is low, and this is directly felt in a proportional increase in the engine weight per hp. In an engine for a light landing machine, required to carry petrol for a two-hour flight, and weighing about 75 lb. per hp, an increase in volumetric efficiency leading to a proportional increase in the b.m.p., is practically twice as valuable as an increase in thermal efficiency leading to an increase in the power.

There is still another aspect in which aero engines vary appreciably and that is in their relative performance at height. Two engines giving the same performance as regards output per unit of weight and petrol consumption per h.p. on the ground may give very different performances when operating under altitude conditions. The smaller the falling off of the engine's output at height, the greater is what, for want of a better word, may be called the altitude efficiency of an engine.

These various efficiencies are affected by the design and conditions of operation of the engine. During the last few years experimental work has been done on aero engines and a great deal of data has been gained bearing on this question. The data embodied in this paper are, in the main, the results of tests carried out by the author and his colleagues between 1916 and 1919 at the R.A.E.

Mechanical Efficiency

The mechanical losses in a petrol engine are due to:

1. Bearing friction, and to driving of valve gear and accessories.
2. Piston friction.
3. Piston pumping losses.
4. Friction losses (in rotary engine).

Strictly speaking the last two are not mechanical losses, but are usually included under this head.

The total loss in an improved state engine of modern design at normal speed and full load may be taken as approximately between 18 lb. and 14.0 lb. per sq. in. of piston area, the lower figure referring to radial air-cooled engines, and the higher to water-cooled engines. Taking 120 lb. per sq. in. as a reasonable value for the b.m.p., the losses are approximately 15 per cent of 825 and 9.5 per cent of 1470.

From experiments it appears that the mechanical efficiency of the rotary engine, even if well cooled, is more 10 per cent less than that of the corresponding radial engine.

Volumetric Efficiency

Defining volumetric efficiency as the ratio of the volume of actual gas entering the cylinder per cycle to the volume of air at standard temperature and pressure (10 deg. C. and 760 mm. of mercury) of the charge entering the cylinder per working stroke in the volume swept by the piston, it is evident that the volumetric efficiency which is possible in a given engine, depending as it does on the pressure and temperature at which the charge actually enters the cylinder, will depend not only upon the cylinder design and its temperature, but also upon the pressure and temperature of the surrounding air.

As these may vary over a wide range during the operation of an aero engine, one should always be specified when questions of volumetric efficiency are kindred.

For a given air pressure and temperature, say N.T.P., the pressure and temperature of the charge in the cylinder at the end of the suction stroke are affected by:

- (a) The resistance to flow through the induction system and valves.
- (b) The cooling effect of petrol vaporization in the induction and induction pipe.
- (c) The temperature of the cylinder walls, piston, and valves.
- (d) The compression ratio.
- (e) The pressure of the residual products of combustion left in the clearance space at the end of the exhaust stroke.
- (f) The valve timing.

Maximum Possible Volumetric Efficiency

Under favorable circumstances the volumetric efficiency may be expected to attain a value as high as that corresponding to the volume ratio realized at the instant of valve closure, and if the closing of the valve is about 45 deg. late be reduced to the maximum value for normal high speed operation, the corresponding volumetric efficiency would be 88 per cent.

An engine of 50 have been measured on air-cooled cylinders with a valve timing giving an intake volume of 45 deg. late and as values of 80 have been obtained at comparatively slow speeds with a closure 30 deg. late, such a value would appear to be not impossible if statement is proved.

While the b.m.p. is held at about 100 lb. per sq. in. as speed with late valve closure, such values can only be attained at speeds where the piston pulsations in the induction or exhaust pipe assist in increasing the effective induction pressure, or in reducing the exhaust pressure.

Measured values of the volumetric efficiency for a number of engines all of which enter in normal temperature and pressure, were found to range between 70 and 85.

Thermal Efficiency

In an internal combustion engine using a working fluid where specific heat is independent of temperature, it may readily be shown that the ideal thermal efficiency is given by the expression:

$$\eta = 1 - (1/r)^{\gamma-1}$$

where r is the ratio of the specific heats at constant pressure and constant volume, and γ is the compression ratio. In the case of air γ is 1.405, so that the expression for this "air cycle efficiency" is:

$$\eta = 1 - (1/r)^{.4}$$

Corresponding values of η are shown in lines 1 and 2 on the following table and is the upper curve of Fig. 1.

Owing to the fact that the specific heat of the mixture in a petrol engine increases with temperature, the maximum theoretical efficiency is less than could be attained with the ideal working fluid, and the possible thermal efficiencies are less than are given by the above expression.

TABLE

1	Value of γ	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Air Cycle Efficiency as a %	101	102	103	104	105	106
3	Temp. with variable specific heat	101	102	103	104	105	106
4	Time required in days	101	102	103	104	105	106
5	Power, in per. kilowatts required	101	102	103	104	105	106
	and efficiency (%)	101	102	103	104	105	106

Taking into account the variation of specific heat with temperature, as well as our present knowledge permits, the possible thermal efficiencies with the best air petrol mixture known at the time of the table are shown in lines 14 and 15 on the following table. Assuming 90 per cent as the maximum efficiency of a good modern aero engine, the possible thermal efficiency calculated on the b.m.p. has the value shown

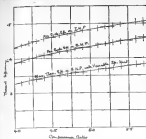


FIG. 1

in line 4 and in the lower curve of Fig. 1. These are the highest values actually obtained on a petrol engine working on the constant volume cycle with no heat losses to the cylinder walls, with complete combustion of fuel, and with expansion down to the end of the stroke. The corresponding petrol consumption per h.p. at line 5 of the table. These thermal efficiencies corresponding to various petrol consumptions are shown by the curve of Fig. 2.

Experiments show that the best modern aero engine is capable of operating on from 50 to 55 parts (455 to 497 lb.) of petrol per h.p. hour with compression ratio in the neighborhood of 5.9. The lower figure is exceptional, but has been attained under normal running conditions. A consumption as low as 48 parts (444 lb.) has been obtained in single cylinder tests on an air-cooled 5 1/2 in. x 5 1/2 in. engine at the R.A.E.

Typical test results which have come under the author's personal notice are divided into two parts, the first giving the best maximum test results for water-cooled and air-cooled engines, and the second the best work obtainable. While conventionally adopted, the numerical value of r based on the piston displacement and the piston volume as net the net compression ratio. If compression be measured in compression ratio, the net valve closure, and if the compression ratio is obtained on the volume that is on the cylinder at this point, a value is obtained which probably more correctly represents the true ratio.

Using the latter figures as the basis of comparison, it appears that the best water-cooled engine can give 70 per cent of the possible theoretical efficiency on a maximum test mixture and 65 per cent on a weak mixture. The best air-cooled engine gives 62 per cent on a maximum test mixture and 50 per cent on a weak mixture. The best air-cooled engine has been obtained from single cylinders. Tests indicate that the work output efficiency of a multi-cylinder engine is less than that of the individual cylinders of which it is composed. The difference depends on the efficiency of the induction system, but in the average 12-cylinder Vee is from 8 to 10 per cent, so that the work output efficiency of the corresponding best air-cooled multi-cylinder engine would be about exactly the same as that of the best of the water-cooled engines.

The average maximum land relative efficiency for the whole of the water-cooled engine is 70 per cent, and for the whole of the air-cooled engine having aluminium cylinders is 70.6. The average relative efficiency on weak mixtures is 65 per cent for the water-cooled and 67.5 per cent for the aluminium

air-cooled engine. The results indicate that as regards thermal efficiency there is practically no difference between the best air-cooled and the best water-cooled engines. They also show that the best engines are remarkably efficient and leave little scope for further improvement in the way of thermal efficiency if operated on reasonably weak mixtures.

Conclusions

The general conclusions to which this paper would lead are:

(1) The mechanical efficiency of a well designed water-cooled five engine, having direct drive, should not be less than about 60 per cent at full load. In the same engine, if geared, it should not be less than 55 per cent. The sterile radial air-cooled engine may, in general, be expected to give mechanical efficiencies about 5 per cent higher, and the rotary air-cooled engine, if well cooled, about 10 per cent lower.

(2) The volumetric efficiency, owing to the cooling effect of petrol vaporization, is higher than in the corresponding gas engine. This cooling effect appears usually to obtain fullness, the leading effect of the cylinder walls, piston, and valve losses. With short induction and exhaust pipes, the volumetric efficiency is mainly governed by the inlet valve timing. Under normal conditions of operation, a volumetric efficiency of 65 per cent is about the maximum to be expected. The value increases with the compression ratio, and is appreciably reduced by any back pressure in the exhaust pipe.

(3) The thermal efficiency increases with the compression ratio, within limits. The compression ratio giving maximum efficiency depends on the cylinder design. In a well-designed air-cooled engine with aluminium cylinders operating under ground conditions it is at the neighborhood of 5.5. In a well-designed water-cooled engine it is a little higher, approximately between 5.5 and 6.0. The thermal efficiency on maximum load, for compression ratios below about 5.5 is a good air-cooled engine, and 6.4 is a good water-cooled engine, increase more rapidly with increased compression ratio than does the improvement for the air cycle efficiency. This is due partly to the reduced heat losses, and partly to the accompanying increase in mechanical efficiency.

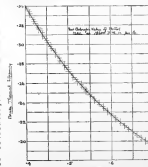


FIG. 2

* Extracted from paper in the Transactions of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

Government Aeronautical Documents

Copies of the following documents are available through purchase from the Superintendent of Public Documents, Washington, D. C. Reproduction should be made by money order, check, express order or New York draft. Prices will be furnished on request.

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Therapeutics Delivered by Airplane

W. S. George, County Health Officer of Contra Costa County, Cal., in having his emergency therapeutics delivered by airplane. The Western Laboratories of Oakland will make up any therapeutic on a receipt's notice and have it delivered in a matter of minutes.

The Medical Problems of Flying

The question of occupational diseases is one of fairly wide spread interest, not alone to medical men but to those who give thought to the welfare and development of humanity.

In this connection the study of the medical problems that have appeared in the development of aeronautics is of paramount interest, and those who may be engaged in investigating along this line will find valuable information in the pages of the latest report of the Air Hygiene Committee appointed by the National Research Council in consultation with the Air Ministry of Great Britain.

"It is clearly impossible," according to the report referred to, "to draw an absolutely sharp line of distinction between the immediate and remote effects of flying at low as opposed to high altitudes, because many symptoms are common to both. At the same time it is healthy and it is individuals who fly from 15,000 to 20,000 ft. or more, a group of symptoms can be isolated which may, properly, be attributed to the physical effect induced by the lowered pressure of oxygen in the air breathed. It must be borne in mind that the acoustics for altitude in the isolation and other duties of a flight may, in itself, serve to direct a flier's notice from physical symptoms which he later becomes insensitive. Further, it must be remembered that one of the most important effects of oxygen starvation is a derelict of the judgment and intellect and an uncontrolled sense of well-being and security.

In the connection the cases of two flight commanders may be cited who occurred they were just as fit at 20,000 ft. as on the ground, and needed at the time of some oxygen. A week later, however, these same officers, having both and one for a long flight of more than three hours at an altitude of over 18,000 ft., were lost as their planes of the altitude it contained, and made the use necessary among their pilots and observers."

The most interesting aspect of the whole question, and one of great practical importance, is the remarkable variation not only among individuals who are, apparently, equally healthy. The use of Plank's bag experiment enables one to isolate these very rare cases of men with heart and lungs sufficiently normal who are so peculiarly sensitive to the effects of even a moderate fall of barometric pressure that they are, practically, debilitated from flying of any description. But, beyond these quite exceptional cases, marked differences exist as regards the reaction of the organism to diminished oxygen pressure, and many pilots, especially sound pilots, realize nothing unusual when flying at 20,000 ft.

The Air Medical Investigation Committee not only gave assistance to France as well as England to experiment with which had been undertaken by medical men and physiologists both in and out of the military service, but at the close of the war it actually offered its services to the President of the A. I. Board, to whom it has supplied further expert assistance.

It is to be noted, therefore, that the standards for all the tests reported were worked out in the first instance upon successful flying officers, and that all definitions are designed to be in clinical examinations and not in any way to supply them.

German Plane Inquiry

Congressman Julius Kahn introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives regarding information regarding the purchase of German airplanes by the Government. The resolution as passed was as follows:

Resolved, That the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy shall be requested to report to the House the number of German aeroplanes purchased by the department in 1919, the total cost of which payment for such planes was made, the authority for their purchase, the agency through which such planes were purchased, the price paid per plane, the use in which these planes have been put, the number of such planes destroyed by fire or otherwise, the number of pilots killed in the result of such destruction, the number of planes of American make in the possession of the respective departments, and the number in use.

The resolution originally called for a similar report from the Postmaster General, but it was not called for as such a report had been made already.



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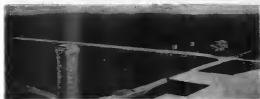
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Auto Import Corp.	246
American Plane & Motor Co.	222
Aviation Service Directory	250
Aviation Company of America	240

B

Brewster-Goldsmith Corp.	248
--------------------------	-----

C

Curtis Aeroplane & Motor Corporation	223
--------------------------------------	-----

D

Dayton Wright	251
Diamond State Fibre Co.	248
Dignity, Ralph C.	248

E

East International Co.	247
Edward, Raymond M.	248

F

Lawrence Sperry Aircraft Co.	249
------------------------------	-----

M

Magin, L. C., Petroleum Co.	252
Martin, The Glass L. Co.	254

P

Philadelphia Aero-Servicing Corp.	249
-----------------------------------	-----

T

Thomas-Wire Aircraft Corp.	239
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2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 2680, 2681, 2682, 2683, 2684, 2685, 2686, 2687, 2688, 2689, 2690, 2691, 2692, 2693, 2694, 2695, 2696, 2697, 2698, 2699, 2700, 2701, 2702, 2703, 2704, 2705, 2706, 2707, 2708, 2709, 2710, 2711, 2712, 2713, 2714, 2715, 2716, 2717, 2718, 2719, 2720, 2721, 2722, 2723, 2724, 2725, 2726, 2727, 2728, 2729, 2730, 2731, 2732, 2733, 2734, 2735, 2736, 2737, 2738, 2739, 2740, 2741, 2742, 2743, 2744, 2745, 2746, 2747, 2748, 2749, 2750, 2751, 2752, 2753, 2754, 2755, 2756, 2757, 2758, 2759, 2760, 2761, 2762, 2763, 2764, 2765, 2766, 2767, 2768, 2769, 2770, 2771, 2772, 2773, 2774, 2775, 2776, 2777, 2778, 2779, 2780, 2781, 2782, 2783, 2784, 2785, 2786, 2787, 2788, 2789, 2790, 2791, 2792, 2793, 2794, 2795, 2796, 2797, 2798, 2799, 2800, 2801, 2802, 2803, 2804, 2805, 2806, 2807, 2808, 2809, 2810, 2811, 2812, 2813, 2814, 2815, 2816, 2817, 2818, 2819, 2820, 2821, 2822, 2823, 2824, 2825, 2826, 2827, 2828, 2829, 2830, 2831, 2832, 2833, 2834, 2835, 2836, 2837, 2838, 2839, 2840, 2841, 2842, 2843, 2844, 2845, 2846, 2847, 2848, 2849, 2850, 2851, 2852, 2853, 2854, 2855, 2856, 2857, 2858, 2859, 2860, 2861, 2862, 2863, 2864, 2865, 2866, 2867, 2868, 2869, 2870, 2871, 2872, 2873, 2874, 2875, 2876, 2877, 2878, 2879, 2880, 2881, 2882, 2883, 2884, 2885, 2886, 2887, 2888, 2889, 2890, 2891, 2892, 2893, 2894, 2895, 2896, 2897, 2898, 2899, 2900, 2901, 2902, 2903, 2904, 2905, 2906, 2907, 2908, 2909, 2910, 2911, 2912, 2913, 2914, 2915, 2916, 2917, 2918, 2919, 2920, 2921, 2922, 2923, 2924, 2925, 2926, 2927, 2928, 2929, 2930, 2931, 2932, 2933, 2934, 2935, 2936, 2937, 2938, 2939, 2940, 2941, 2942, 2943, 2944, 2945, 2946, 2947, 2948, 2949, 2950, 2951, 2952, 2953, 2954, 2955, 2956, 2957, 2958, 2959, 2960, 2961, 2962, 2963, 2964, 2965, 2966, 2967, 2968, 2969, 2970, 2971, 2972, 2973, 2974, 2975, 2976, 2977, 2978, 2979, 2980, 2981, 2982, 2983, 2984, 2985, 2986, 2987, 2988, 2989, 2990, 2991, 2992, 2993, 2994, 2995, 2996, 2997, 2998, 2999, 3000, 3001, 3002, 3003, 3004, 3005, 3006, 3007, 3008, 3009, 3010, 3011, 3012, 3013, 3014, 3015, 3016, 3017, 3018, 3019, 3020, 3021, 3022, 3023, 3024, 3025, 3026, 3027, 3028, 3029, 3030, 3031, 3032, 3033, 3034, 3035, 3036, 3037, 3038, 3039, 3040, 3041, 3042, 3043, 3044, 3045, 3046, 3047, 3048, 3049, 3050, 3051, 3052, 3053, 3054, 3055, 3056, 3057, 3058, 3059, 3060, 3061, 3062, 3063, 3064, 3065, 3066, 3067, 3068, 3069, 3070, 3071, 3072, 3073, 3074, 3075, 3076, 3077, 3078, 3079, 3080, 3081, 3082, 3083, 3084, 3085, 3086, 3087, 3088, 3089, 3090, 3091, 3092, 3093, 3094, 3095, 3096, 3097, 3098, 3099, 3100, 3101, 3102, 3103, 3104, 3105, 3106, 3107, 3108, 3109, 3110, 3111, 3112, 3113, 3114, 3115, 3116, 3117, 3118, 3119, 3120, 3121, 3122, 3123, 3124, 3125, 3126, 3127, 3128, 3129, 3130, 3131, 3132, 3133, 3134, 3135, 3136, 3137, 3138, 3139, 3140, 3141, 3142, 3143, 3144, 3145, 3146, 3147, 3148, 3149, 3150, 3151, 3152, 3153, 3154, 3155, 3156, 3157, 3158, 3159, 3160, 3161, 3162, 3163, 3164, 3165, 3166, 3167, 3168, 3169, 3170, 3171, 3172, 3173, 3174, 3175, 3176, 3177, 3178, 3179, 3180, 3181, 3182, 3183, 3184, 3185, 3186, 3187, 3188, 3189, 3190, 3191, 3192, 3193, 3194, 3195, 3196, 3197, 3198, 3199, 3200, 3201, 3202, 3203, 3204, 3205, 3206, 3207, 3208, 3209, 3210, 3211, 3212, 3213, 3214, 3215, 3216, 3217, 3218, 3219, 3220, 3221, 3222, 3223, 3224, 3225, 3226, 3227, 3228, 3229, 3230, 3231, 3232, 3233, 3234, 3235, 3236, 3237, 3238, 3239, 3240, 3241, 3242, 3243, 3244, 3245, 3246, 3247, 3248, 3249, 3250, 3251, 3252, 3253, 3254, 3255, 3256, 3257, 3258, 3259, 3260, 3261, 3262, 3263, 3264, 3265, 3266, 3267, 3268, 3269, 3270, 3271, 3272, 3273, 3274, 3275, 3276, 3277, 3278, 3279, 3280, 3281, 3282, 3283, 3284, 3285, 3286, 3287, 3288, 3289, 3290, 3291, 3292, 3293, 3294, 3295, 3296, 3297, 3298, 3299, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304, 3305, 3306, 3307, 3308, 3309, 3310, 3311, 3312, 3313, 3314, 3315, 3316, 3317, 3318, 3319, 3320, 3321, 3322, 3323, 3324, 3325, 3326, 3327, 3328, 3329, 3330, 3331, 3332, 3333, 3334, 3335, 3336, 3337, 3338, 3339, 3340, 3341, 3342, 3343, 3344, 3345, 3346, 3347, 3348, 3349, 3350, 3351, 3352, 3353, 3354, 3355, 3356, 3357, 3358, 3359, 3360, 3361, 3362, 3363, 3364, 3365, 3366, 3367, 3368, 3369, 3370, 3371, 3372, 3373, 3374, 3375, 3376, 3377, 3378, 3379, 3380, 3381, 3382, 3383, 3384, 3385, 3386, 3387, 3388, 3389, 3390, 3391, 3392, 3393, 3394, 3395, 3396, 3397, 3398, 3399, 3400, 3401, 3402, 3403, 3404, 3405, 3406, 3407, 3408, 3409, 3410, 3411, 3412, 3413, 3414, 3415, 3416, 3417, 3418, 3419, 3420, 3421, 3422, 3423, 3424, 3425, 3426, 3427, 3428, 3429, 3430, 3431, 3432, 3433, 3434, 3435, 3436, 3437, 3438, 3439, 3440, 3441, 3442, 3443, 3444, 3445, 3446, 3447, 3448, 3449, 3450, 3451, 3452, 3453, 3454, 3455, 3456, 3457, 3458, 3459, 3460, 3461, 3462, 3463, 3464, 3465, 3466, 3467, 3468, 3469, 3470, 3471, 3472, 3473, 3474, 3475, 3476, 3477, 3478, 3479, 3480, 3481, 3482, 3483, 3484, 3485, 3486, 3487, 3488, 3489, 3490, 3491, 3492, 3493, 3494, 3495, 3496, 3497, 3498, 3499, 3500, 3501, 3502, 3503, 3504, 3505, 3506, 3507, 3508, 3509, 3510, 3511, 3512, 3513, 3514, 3515, 3516, 3517, 3518, 3519, 3520, 3521, 3522, 3523, 3524, 3525, 3526, 3527, 3528, 3529, 3530, 3531, 3532, 3533, 3534, 3535, 3536, 3537, 3538, 3539, 3540, 3541, 3542, 3543, 3544, 3545, 3546, 3547, 3548, 3549, 3550, 3551, 3552, 3553, 3554, 3555, 3556, 3557, 3558, 3559, 3560, 3561, 3562, 3563, 3564, 3565, 3566, 3567, 3568, 3569, 3570, 3571, 3572, 3573, 3574, 3575, 3576, 3577, 3578, 3579, 3580, 3581, 3582, 3583, 3584, 3585, 3586, 3587, 3588, 3589, 3590, 3591, 3592, 3593, 3594, 3595, 3596, 3597, 3598, 3599, 3600, 3601, 3602, 3603, 3604, 3605, 3606, 3607, 3608, 3609, 3610, 3611, 3612, 3613, 3614, 3615, 3616, 3617, 3618, 3619, 3620, 3621, 3622, 3623, 3624, 3625, 3626, 3627, 3628, 3629, 3630, 3631, 3632, 3633, 3634, 3635, 3636, 3637, 3638, 3639, 3640, 3641, 3642, 3643, 3644, 3645, 3646, 3647, 3648, 3649, 3650, 3651, 3652, 3653, 3654, 3655, 3656, 3657, 3658, 3659, 3660, 3661, 3662, 3663, 3664, 3665, 3666, 3667, 3668, 3669, 3670, 3671, 3672, 3673, 3674, 3675, 3676, 3677, 3678, 3679, 3680, 3681, 3682, 3683, 3684, 3685, 3686, 3687, 3688, 3689, 3690, 3691, 3692, 3693, 3694, 3695, 3696, 3697, 3698, 3699, 3700, 3701, 3702, 3703, 3704, 3705, 3706, 3707, 3708, 3709, 3710, 3711, 3712, 3713, 3714, 3715, 3716, 3717, 3718, 3719, 3720, 3721, 3722, 3723, 3724, 3725, 3726, 3727, 3728, 3729, 3730, 3731, 3732, 3733, 3734, 3735, 3736, 3737, 3738, 3739, 3740, 3741, 3742, 3743, 3744, 3745, 3746, 3747, 3748, 3749, 3750, 3751, 3752, 3753, 3754, 3755, 3756, 3757, 3758, 3759, 3760, 3761, 3762, 3763, 3764, 3765, 3766, 3767, 3768, 3769, 3770, 3771, 3772, 3773, 3774, 3775, 3776, 3777, 3778, 3779, 3780, 3781, 3782, 3783, 3784, 3785, 3786, 3787, 3788, 3789, 3790, 3791, 3792, 3793, 3794, 3795, 3796, 3797, 3798, 3799, 3800, 3801, 3802, 3803, 3804, 3805, 3806, 3



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